

*The Excellence Dividend*  
THE EIGHTEEN “NUMBER ONES”

- \***Investment #1: TRAINING** (“Radical personal development” for all = Moral Responsibility = Immeasurable longterm strategic-differentiation opportunity = \$\$\$\$\$. 10X more important in the Age of AI.)
- \***Asset #1: PORTFOLIO OF FIRST-LINE MANAGERS** (Key #1 to employee productivity/retention/product-service quality/customer fan-hood. Selection/training/mentoring of 1<sup>st</sup>-line chiefs is a strategic priority.)
- \***Core Value #1: LISTENING EXCELLENCE!!!** (“Fierce listening”/“Aggressive listening” to staff, outsiders. Note: Effective listening is time-consuming/exhausting! Effective listening is train-able!) (Branson: Listening is Leadership Key #1.)
- \***Obsession #1: EXECUTION/“THE LAST 95%”** (Omar Bradley: “Amateurs talk about strategy. Professionals talk about logistics.” Fred Malek: “Execution *is* strategy.” Conrad Hilton Secret #1: “Don’t forget to tuck the shower curtain into the bathtub.”)
- \***Job #1: ESTABLISHING/MAINTAINING “60/60/24/7/365” A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE-BY-PUTTING-PEOPLE-REALLY-FIRST** (Plausible/Profitable/Ennobling: No less than a “joyful” workplace!!!!/FYI: “PEOPLE [REALLY] FIRST” = CUSTOMERS FIRST = \$\$\$\$ = SOCIETAL CONTRIBUTION.) (Branson: “Business has to give people enriching, rewarding lives, or it’s not worth doing.” DeJulius: “Your customers will never be happier than your employees.”)
- \***Calling #1: LEADING IS A HUMAN-POTENTIAL-MAXIMIZATION ACTIVITY—THERE IS NO HIGHER CALLING.** Any leader absolutely has the opportunity to dramatically affect the lives of thousands—far more than any surgeon.
- \***Value-Added Strategy #1: DESIGN EXCELLENCE/RADICAL HUMANIZATION** (Apple: “Steve and Jony spent hours discussing corners.”/Review of MINI Cooper S: “No vehicle in recent memory has provoked more smiles.”/Metro Bank: A jillion little touches, e.g., dog biscuits, scintillating branches, and wonderfully welcoming staff./Healthcare: Human kindness in its delivery promotes healing./DesignX and RadHumanization are by and large beyond the foreseeable reach of AI) (And a great-legacy.)
- \***Success Credo #1: “ARE YOU GOING TO COST CUT YOUR WAY TO PROSPERITY? OR ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND YOUR WAY TO PROSPERITY?” “OVER-INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE, OVER-INVEST IN OUR FACILITIES.” “COST CUTTING IS A DEATH SPIRAL. OUR WHOLE STORY IS GROWING REVENUE.”** (Metro Bank/Commerce Bank mantra/hyper-contrarian consumer banking mega-success USA/UK.)
- \***Organization Effectiveness/\$\$\$\$ Payoff #1: WOMEN BUY EVERYTHING.** (Consumer/ Commercial) **WOMEN HAVE ALL THE MONEY.** (Another \$22 trillion of wealth transfer to women in the next 5 years.) **WOMEN ARE BETTER LEADERS.** (Solid research on this: E.g., F>M in 12 of 16 key leadership traits per *Harvard Business Review*/50-50 M-F Boards = Plus 58% profitability per McKinsey. **SO WHAT’S YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TEAM F-M COMPOSITION????**)
- \***Missed Opportunity #1: OLDIES/RICH, MEGA-NUMEROUS, IGNORED—PLENTY OF TIME LEFT** (“People at 50 have more than half their adult life ahead of them”—e.g., Americans buy 13 cars in a lifetime, 7 after age 50. Household net worth 65 plus is 47X > 35 minus. “Marketers attempts at reaching those over 50 have been miserably unsuccessful.”)
- \***Economic Cornerstone #1: SMEs RULE/“BE THE BEST, IT’S THE ONLY MARKET THAT’S NOT CROWDED.”** (SMEs/Small and Medium-size Enterprises create the jobs, employ almost all of us, are the prime innovators—every economy’s backbone. Monster-size businesses cut costs, dump people over the side, underperform the market.)
- \***Innovation Strategy #1: WTTMSW/WHOEVER TRIES THE MOST STUFF WINS Extended: WTTMS(ASTMSUTF)/WHOEVER TRIES THE MOST STUFF (AND SCREWS THE MOST STUFF UP THE FASTEST) WINS** (Innovation guaranteed!!!/But requires supportive culture: “Try it. NOW.” “Fail. Forward. Fast.” “Reward excellent failures. Punish mediocre successes.” Wayne Gretzky: “You miss 100% of the shots you never take.”)
- \***Personal Habit #1: READ. READ. READ. READ. READ.** (Investor superstar: Not reading enough = CEO Deficit #1.)
- \***Time Management Must #1: SLOW DOWN** (All the important things—relationship building and maintenance, culture maintenance, aggressive listening, Excellence—take time, lots of.)
- \***Making Things Happen Dictate #1: LUNCH!!!** (The “Sacred 225 At Bats” = 225 Lunch Opportunities/Year = 225 Golden-Never-to-Be-Repeated Opportunities to meet new people, learn new things, establish and cement relationships up/down the organization and way beyond. LUNCH = NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY #1. Do NOT waste a single lunch opportunity/Keep score!)
- \***Daily Activity #1: MBWA/MANAGING BY WANDERING AROUND** (Daily. Daily = EVERY DAY. No excuses. Ever./And: If you don’t LOVE doing regular MBWA, choose another career!!!)
- \***Commandment #1: EXCELLENCE IS THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES** (Excellence = ULTIMATE SHORT-TERM STRATEGY = Next email/Chance hallway meeting/Saying “Thank you” for something small/Lending a helping hand for a half-hour when you’re busy ...)
- \***Axiom #1: HARD (NUMBERS, PLANS, ORG CHARTS) IS SOFT. SOFT (RELATIONSHIPS, CULTURE, LISTENING, EXCELLENCE) IS HARD.** Sustaining winners: THE MIS-NAMED “SOFT STUFF” COMES F-I-R-S-T!!!!